

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SY-05 MCT-01 DHA-02 ACDA-10

USSS-00 SCA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 /089 W

-----050966 091421Z /46

P R 091334Z AUG 77

FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1744

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDONDERRY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

UNCLAS BELFAST 250

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UK, EI

SUBJECT: ROYAL VISIT AND INTERNMENT ANNIVERSARY

REF: BELFAST 249

1. BONFIRES, VEHICLE HIJACKINGS, BARRICADES, SPORADIC RIOTING AND THE BANGING OF (GARBAGE) BIN-LIDS BEGINNING IN CATHOLIC AREAS AT 2 A.M. TODAY SIGNALLED THE ANNIVERSARY OF INTERNMENT, AUGUST 9, 1971. PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN AND THE PROVISIONAL IRA ARE SEEKING TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE PRESENCE OF HUNDREDS OF JOURNALISTS HERE TO COVER THE ROYAL JUBILEE VISIT BEGINNING TOMORROW. JUDGING BY THE BRITISH PRESS THIS MORNING, THEY ARE GETTING THE ATTENTION THEY SEEK. THERE IS LITTLE DISCERNIBLE POPULAR SENTIMENT OPPOSING THE ROYAL VISIT. MOST OF THE RESIDENTS OF ANDERSONSTOWN, ARDOYNE, THE FALLS, NEW LODGE, SHORT STRAND AND BALLYMURPHY WOULD PREFER TO LET THE EVENTS PASS QUIETLY BUT THERE ARE ENOUGH ACTIVISTS TO CREATE CONDITIONS OF NEAR ANARCHY. AT LEAST SEVEN VEHICLES, MOSTLY PRIVATE AUTOMOBILES, WERE HI-JACKED AND BURNED ON THE FALLS LAST NIGHT AND THE ARMY WAS KEPT BUSY DISMANTLING BARRICADES

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AND KEEPING MAIN STREETS OPEN. THE MOST SERIOUS INCIDENT OCCURRED ABOUT 1100 TODAY WHEN THE ARMY SHOT DEAD A YOUTH IN THE ACT OF THROWING A MOLOTOV COCKTAIL. THE ARMY SAID HE WAS 17 YEARS OLD, PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN CLAIMED HE WAS 14. SINCE AUGUST 4 THERE HAVE BEEN TWO WAVES OF HOAX BOMB THREATS THAT HAVE PARALYZED DOWNTOWN BELFAST, TWO SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN SHOT AND WOUNDED IN LONDONDERRY, A PLAIN-CLOTHES POLICEMAN WAS DISCOVERED AND SHOT AT

A BARRICADE IN WEST BELFAST, AND THE SLIEVE DONARD HOTEL IN NEWCASTLE WAS BOMBED.

2. THE MAIN CONFRONTATION IS EXPECTED TOMORROW AUGUST 10 WHEN PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN WILL ATTEMPT A PROTEST MARCH DOWN THE FALLS ROAD TO THE BELFAST CITY HALL. THE ULSTER DEFENSE ASSOCIATION APPARENTLY HAS ABANDONED PLANS TO RALLY AT THE CITY HALL AT THE SAME TIME. HOWEVER THE ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY, WITH THE ARMY IN A BACK-UP ROLE, WILL MEET THE MARCHERS AS CASTLE STREET AT THE BOTTOM OF THE FALLS AND WILL PREVENT THEM FROM CONTINUING. THE ZEAL OF THE MARCHERS WILL BE HEIGHTENED BY THE WIDESPREAD BELIEF IN THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY THAT SECURITY FORCES HAVE OPERATED A "MINI-INTERMENT," ROUNDING UP KNOWN PROVISIONAL ACTIVISTS TO HOLD THEM "FOR QUESTIONING" DURING THE ROYAL VISIT.

3. POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS LOCALLY FROM ROYAL VISIT MAY BE PROFOUND. PUBLIC REFUSAL OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY (SDLP) LEADERS GERRY FITT AND JOHN HUME TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY LOCAL JUBILEE ACTIVITIES HAVE EVOKED HOSTILE UNIONIST RESPONSES. HUME CHARACTERIZED THE TIMING (BETWEEN THE DATES OF AUGUST 9 AND 12) AS INSENSITIVE AND IRRESPONSIBLE, DESIGNED TO "TO IDENTIFY THE MONARCH WITH THE MOST TRIUMPHALIST SECTION OF LOYALIST TRADITION." OFFICIAL UNIONIST JOHN TAYLOR SAID WHILE MANY CATHOLICS WOULD ATTEND JUBILEE RECEPTIONS, HUME ATTITUDE DEMONSTRATED UNFITNESS OF SDLP TO PARTICIPATE IN ULSTER

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GOVERNMENT. ANNEE DICKSON LEADER OF UNIONIST PARTY NORTHERN IRELAND ALSO CRITICIZED SDLP POSTURE. THOSE LESS MODERATE HAVE YET TO BE HEARD.SPICER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, VISITS, COMMEMORATIVE CELEBRATIONS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Comment:
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770286-0269
Format: TEL
From: BELFAST
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770883/aaaacsiv.tel
Line Count: 97
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3f03dd5f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BELFAST 249
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1668600
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ROYAL VISIT AND INTERNMENT ANNIVERSARY
TAGS: PINT, UK, EI
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3f03dd5f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009